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3. Khabarovsk Krai
5. Maritime Krai
6. Sakhalin Oblast

The two sketch maps inserted in the book show the old and the new administrative division. In the following presentation the old administrative units must be used as a rule in statistical information.

The new division of the administrative regions which has been made often during the period of Soviet rule, shows that the Soviet Far East is still not in its final from, neither as to population nor as to the development of its economy nor yet as to its administrative order; everything is in vital flux, everything is coming into being and becoming.

Unveiling and Occupation

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The conquest of Siberia, begun in 1581 by Yermak and his Cossacks, moved forward to the east very quickly, unhampered by the sparse population. It followed the great rivers, whose watery courses served the Cossacks both as a route and as a sign-post into the vast areas never before tresspassed upon by a European. River area after river area was thus transversed by them and secured by bases remaining there. Already by 1632 the city of Yakutsk was founded in the land of the Yakut on the middle Lena, and from then on this city served as a starting point for further pressure forward. In 1638 a Cossack division of Ataman Koplov proceeded along the Aldan and its tributary the Maya. They wanted to go to the "Great Sea," which the Tungus reported to them and which the Tungus called the "lamu," the "sea." However, they went only around 100 kilometers along the Maya and then had to stop for the winter. A smaller group under the leadership of the Cossack Moskvitin advanced farther along the way. They carried their boats from the upper Maya over the watershed of the Dzhugdzhur and reached the Ul'ya, which carried them on. In 1649 these Cossacks reached the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk, being the first Europeans to do so. At the mouth of the Ul'ya, somewhat south of present day Okhotsk, Mosvitin established a base and explored the coast to the north and south and /19/ /Map of the Soviet Far East as of 1953:/ /20/ went as far as the mouth of the Uda. However, he did not find the Shantar Islands. They were discovered only in 1710. Another Cossack by the name of Shelkovnikov founded

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the sea base Okhotsk at the mouth of the small river Okhota still in the same year of 1649; Okhotsk has for a long time served as the Russians' main harbor.

From Yakutsk northeastern Siberia was also opened up. In 1633 Rebrov and Perfiliev went down the Lena into the unknown distance and reached the Artic Ocean, which they followed along the coast to the east and discovered the mouth of the Yana. Ivan Yerastov, proceeding from the Yana, reached the Indigirka and the Alazeya in 1641. In the same year Stadukhin went farther to the east and came to the Kolyma, where he founded the base Nizhne-Kolymsk in 1644. He didn't go farther east, since ice blocked his way, so he turned back to Yakutsk in 1645. Stadukhin brought the first reliable reports on the Chukchee. In 1646 Ignatiev reached the Chaun Bay. In Stadukhin's division which pressed forward to the mouth of the Kolyma was Semion Dezhnev, whose name has endured in the history of the discovery of northeastern Siberia. Despite previous failures, this bold Cossack sea traveler again proceeded east from the mouth of the Kolyma with seven small boats. His goal was the mouth of a large river (the Anadyr'), which by hearsay was supposed to empty into the sea further to the east. In 1648 he sailed around the cape named after him and thus determined the northeastern end of the Asiatic continent. Thus Dezhnev was the first European to travel in the Bering Strait. Because of the thick fog he could not see the American coast on the other side of the strait, but he did report on two islands (Diomede Islands). Dezhnev must have gone very far to the south, for when he was stranded with his boats as a consequence of a storm, he had, according to his own report, to double back to the north, going by foot for ten weeks, in order to reach the mouth of the Anadyr'. The conjecture that Dezhnev eventually reached Kamchatka, cannot be discarded. It can be taken as certain the Popov, one of his companions, traveled around Kamchatka and in Penzhina Bay met other Russian sea travelers coming from Okhotsk. Thus the circle of the Russian opening-up of northeastern Siberia was closed along the coast, where the Dezhnev route and the Moskvitin direction met. Popov later traveled the Tigil' River on Kamchatka, where he died. His fellow travelers were killed in a disagreement with the natives. There are various documents from Dezhnev and his companions, and these documents report not only on the regions discovered but also on the inhabitants, the Chukchee, the Koryak, and the Eskimo.

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In 1647 Stadukin started out from Yakutsk again toward the Kolyma area, where he remained until 1649, and then he took up again /21/ his old plan of finding the Anadyr'. He knew nothing of the success of Dezhnev's trip. Restrained by his first failure in 1643-44, he selected the land route and this followed the direction which a scarcely known Cossack by the name of Motora had already taken before him. Stadukhin followed the Anyuy, probably the Lesser Anyuy, and with great difficulty crossed the watershed of the present Anadyr' Mountain, and also reached the river of the same name, which he followed to its mouth, where he met Dezhnev. But later he returned to the interior of the Anadyr' region and there founded a base, whose location is unknown. Stadukhin later appeared in Penzhina Bay. It cannot be determined whether he got there by the land or the sea route. His last known deed was the founding of a settlement on Tauyskaya Bay. To Stadukhin we owe the first reports on the interior of northeastern Siberia.

Although Kamchatka had already been touched by various Russians, Cossack leader Atlasov was the first to succeed in taking possession of the peninsula for Russia. In 1697 he was sent out as the commander to the Anadyr', and still in the same year he pressed in to the interior of Kamchatka and established a base in the center of the peninsula on the Kamchatka River. Atlasov was named the first Russian administrator of Kamchatka. Fights with the natives and also with his own Cossacks didn't make his work easy. In 1707 the Cossacks got angry and imprisoned Atlasov, whom they accused of misuse of his office and cruelty. In 1711 he is supposed to have been killed. From 1711 to 1718 there followed the discovery of the Kurils, in which Kosyrevskii in particular performed great service.

It is remarkable that Japan is never mentioned in the reports of the expedition leaders. Atlasov was the first to whom such a report goes back. Once he spoke of a Japanese who was driven onto the land by a shipwreck on the western coast of Kamchatka and who lived with the natives. In 1701 he was brought to Moscow by the Russians, and there he caused great commotion by his tales, and even Peter the Great occupied himself very much with getting a school built for him in which he was to teach Japanese language to a select group of Russian subjects. This school existed until 1739. Its pupils took part in the Bering expedition as interpreters. In another report Atlasov makes a remark that Japanese are supposed to have lived on the southern tip of Kamchatka. For the rest his reports are filled with

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descriptions of the land. Kamchatka's wealth in fish and valuable fur-bearing animals is given especial attention; among the latter the sable and the Kamchatka beaver, as the great sea otter was falsely named, are prominent. For this reason the Russians at that time also called the Bering Sea the Beaver Sea. Kosyrevskii, the /22/ discoverer of the Kurils, later met Japanese several times. His reports on Japan increased Peter the Great's interest in the Far East; he gave the order to conduct further exploratory trips and to secure the unoccupied land for Russia. Already by 1718 all the Kuril Islands were included in maps.

Among Dezhnev's successors the rumor appeared that farther to the east land was supposed to lie on the other side of the ocean. These rumors relied on the reports of the natives of the Chukchi Peninsula, who asserted that in winter that continent, which they designated as the "Great Land," could be reached over the ice. Atlasov called special attention to these reports, and he had the still unknown land drawn on his maps; but it was only Bering and Chirikov who reached Alaska for the first time in 1741 and took possession of it for Russia. A further advance of the Russians followed with the Aleutian Islands and the southern coast of Alaska serving as the guiding lines. In 1812 there were Russian settlers 40 miles outside of San Francisco and a base close to San Francisco. This was the most distant point which the Russians reached in their rapid and dashing settlement of the east. A backward movement followed. In 1867 Alaska, which at that time was considered valueless, was sold to the the United States for 7.2 million dollars, and with this Russia limited herself to the western side of the Pacific.

The movement of the Russians into the still unknown regions of the Far East occurred partly as a result of official orders; in this case the administrative offices in the hinterland carried out the formation and equipping of mostly very small expeditions and also chose the leaders; but in part this movement was the result of private undertakings. The voivode followed then in the tracks of both. The main goal of all expeditions was to take possession of the land through the establishment of bases and to insure the collection of the "yassak," a kind of head tax, which had to be paid by the natives in valuable furs. Also participating in the official expeditions were the private entrepreneurs, the "promyshlenniki," mostly fur traders and hunters, who distinguished themselves in the gouging of the natives no less than the official administrators. Thus it came about that the natives,

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who were shamelessly exploited, often turned against those moving in. Great battles took place with the Chukchee, Koryak, and Kamchadal, and these were decided in the Russians' favor because of their superior weapons. But again and again there were attacks on and murders of collectors of the "yassak." Only at the end of the eighteenth century did peace and order return to the land.

The occupation of Transbaykal and the Amur region did not keep pace with the advance of the Russians in the north; for in Transbaykal and the Amur region the Russians encountered a population which was by comparison more thickly settled and which already had a state /23/ organization. When the Cossacks in 1648 advanced from Irkutsk into Transbaykal, they were first attacked by the nomadic people, the Buryat, a Mongol tribe. Only step by step did they succeed in advancing to the Argun and getting a foothold there. Reconnaissance into and occupation of the Amur area was done, therefore, from the north, from Yakutsk, since the direct route from Lake Baykal such difficulties were encountered. On the report of Tungus that vast rich lands lay south of the Aldan region, Cossack Poyarkov in 1643 undertook the first expedition there with 132 men. From Yakutsk he proceeded along the Aldan and then followed the Aldan's tributary, the Uchur, and then the Gonam. But here winter surprised him on the broad watershed of the newly discovered Stanovoy. The lack of game on the uninhabited ridge of the mountain brought the expedition into very great danger. Death from hunger threatened everyone, and they had to eat tree bark and moss in order to preserve their strength. Despite the great danger Poyarkov succeeded in crossing the watershed on skis, and with the breaking up of the ice he reached the Bryanka, a tributary of the Zeya. Using rafts and boats he himself had made, he went down this river to the Amur, at whose mouth he spent the winter with the primitive fishing people, the Gilyak. In the summer of 1645, using small boats without keels, he proceeded from here along the coast to the north. After a three-month trip with unbelievable deprivations, he landed at the mouth of the Ul'ya, where he encountered Russian settlers and thus was saved. From here he followed the Maya to the Aldan and returned to Yakutsk in 1646. On this hard three-year trip he lost 80 men through illness, enervation, and conflicts with natives. In his description of the Amur country Poyarkov reported on the peoples settled here and mentioned among others the Daur and Gilyak. Of the latter he said that they ate only fish. The Daur, on the other hand, pursued agriculture; barley,

buckwheat, millet, peas, and hemp were cultivated. Likewise animal breeding was known to them, they kept horses, pigs, cattle, and chicken. In the woods he found wild walnut trees. All these tribes paid tribute to the emperor of China, who was called Bogdo-Khan. The natives reported that his warriors fought with fire and bows and arrows. 175 484

Three years after the return of Poyarkov, Khabarov set out again from Yakutsk with 70 men on a new exploratory trip toward Amur. He selected a route running farther to the west than Poyarkov had, and he followed the Olekma and the Tungir in order to reach the Amur via the Urka. There he found a large, hostile population ahead of him and, since he felt himself to be too /24/ weak, he turned back to Yakutsk in 1650. However, the next year he set out again with stronger forces, and by the same route reached the Amur on which he founded the city Albasin /today: Khabarovsk?/ at the mouth of a small river. Agriculture was started, and the place itself was provided with buildings for defense. Numerous Russian peasants followed and settled here. However, the still unknown distances and the waiting booty enticed the restless Cossacks. In a constant fight with the Tungus tribe, the Daur, whose cities he pillaged and destroyed, Khabarov undertook numerous trips on the Amur and also followed the Sungari and the Ussuri. He had to spend the winter of 1651-52 at the mouth of Ussuri on the Amur and there he had to defend himself from vigorous attacks by the Manchu and other peoples. The city of Khabarovsk, later founded at the same spot, bears his name.

The first Russians who advanced into the country were free, very bellicose Cossacks; but with them came Russian settlers and traders at the same time. At favorable trade points they established settlements and, in addition to hunting, agriculture, and fishing, they pursued an active, highly profitable fur trade. Over and above this they demanded the usual "yassak" from the natives. These tributes were collected ruthlessly. Robbing and plundering of the sedentary native population were part of the daily agenda, and accordingly many natives, particularly those pursuing agriculture, left the insecure land and resettled on the right side, the Manchurian side of the Amur. 175 167

By the middle of the seventeenth century there were already a whole series of Russian settlements along the Amur; the capital of these was the above-mentioned Albasin /today: Khabarovsk?/.

their defenses at the time of the first invasion of the Russians. Many Buryat were even taken into the Cossack organization as equals. The Amur country, which remained in China's hands, was not, however, forgotten. With its wealth of furs it soon again enticed many Russians, who advanced along the Amur anew, set up settlements, and with their own hands began to establish themselves economically in the foreign land. The very audacious even ventured as far as the Ussuri country. 175 167

Although the northern border of the Amur country, almost unknown to the Russians and the Chinese equally, had not been laid down exactly and had no border markings, it remained thus for over 160 years. In this period, especially after 1800, numerous Russian scientific expeditions traversed the land. In addition to many well known Russian researchers, such as Maksimovich, Veniukov, Nevelskii, Usoltsev, there also appear many German names of Baltic origin, such as Middendorff, Schrenck, Radde, Schmidt, and Glehn. Outstanding descriptions of the land come especially from Middendorff. At the same time the sea-faring powers began to concern themselves with exploring the northeast coast of Asia. In 1778 Cook traveled the Bering Sea, in 1787 La Pérouse explored the Japanese islands and Sakhalin, and in 1795-98 Broughton worked in the same area. It is interesting that /26/ the poet Adalbert von Chamisso (1815-18) participated in the exploration of Kamchatka and the Aleutian Islands. 175 484

In the geographic research in the Amur country, the question of the mouth of the Amur was of predominant interest, for in this Russia hoped to find access to the Pacific and a favorable harbor. Already in 1777 the far-seeing Czarina Catherine II had, on the basis of the report of the unsuitability of the Sea of Okhotsk, given an order that the Amur mouth be explored. La Pérouse, Broughton, and Krusenstern (1803-1806) had reported that the Amur ended in an estuary, which only in the north had a link with the sea, and this was shallow and not navigable for ocean-going vessels; to the south Sakhalin was connected with the land, i.e., it was a peninsula. In 1846 Gavrilov, who had been commissioned to do exploratory work in this sea area, still confirmed these claims. Nevelskii, a Russian naval officer, turned against this conclusion after practical reflection. He could and would not believe that the powerful masses of water from the immense river, the Amur, should run into an estuary which was almost closed off. It was a dramatic battle which he had to

175 conduct against the explorers recognized by the authorities, and he
484 found support from the new Russian governor for East Siberia, Muraviev, who later was made a count and received the honorary name of Amurskii. Muraviev got him command of a small ship, with which Nevelskii headed for the Far East from Kronstadt and in 1849 began his explorations, even before he had received permission to do so. He determined that the connection to the north between the sea and the Amur Gulf could be traversed at all times by ocean-going vessels with a depth of up to 4 meters, and that Sakhalin was an island, and that accordingly during the warm seasons ocean-going vessels with a depth of up to 5.50 meters could get unhampered to the mouth of the Amur from the Sea of Japan through Tatarskiy Proliv /sound/. This news caused a sensation in Petersburg and awakened anew the greatest interest in the Far East both among the state leaders and among the public. In the meantime explorers such as Middendorff, among others, and later also Nevelskii himself reported that the area east of the Lesser Khingan and of the Ussuri had, for all practical purposes, never been brought under Chinese administration and that it was, therefore, in fact free. Thereupon Muraviev took possession of this area and also the Amur country. All of these events are reported in detail, but from the Chinese point of view, by Aitchen K. Wu in his work appearing in 1950, "China and the Soviet Union" (231).

231. Aitchen, K. Wu. China and the Soviet Union (London, 1950).

[148] In 1858 Russia and China signed the Treaty of Aigun, in which the Amur country was declared to be a Russian possession, while the Ussuri country was to be administered jointly by the two countries. But in 1860 in a treaty with Peking Russia also received the Ussuri country and was promised the Island of Sakhalin. With this, all regions which today belong to /27/ the Soviet Union came under Russian administration. In 1860 Vladivostok was founded, in whose name the imperative of Russia's Far Eastern policy was expressed: "Rule the East!"

General Survey

133 Transbaykal, like the other border areas in the Far East, belongs to the east Siberian mountain country. In contrast to the other